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FM USDEL SECRETARY //BAHRAIN//
TO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARTO 051302

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TAGS: [OVIP](#) [RICE](#) [CONDOLEEZZA](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PVTS](#)
PINR, KU, IZ
SUBJECT: (U) SECRETARY RICE'S APRIL 22, 2008
PARTICIPATION IN THE THIRD EXPANDED IRAQ NEIGHBORS
CONFERENCE

¶1. (U) Classified by: Kevin Whitaker, Deputy
Executive Secretary, S/ES, Department of State.
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶2. (U) April 22, 2008, Kuwait City, Kuwait

¶3. (U) Participants:

U.S.
The Secretary
A/S C. David Welch, NEA
Ambassador David Satterfield, NEA/I
Ambassador Ryan Crocker, U.S. Embassy Baghdad
LTG William Fraser, JCS
Matthias Mittman, NSC
Matt Tueller, U.S. Embassy Baghdad
Thomas Rosenberger (Embassy Notetaker)

Non-USG Meeting Participants:
Kuwaiti Prime Minister Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al Sabah
Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki
Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari
UN Under-Secretary General Lynn Pascoe
Canadian Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Deepak Obhrai
Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Mohammed Bader Al-Deen
Jordanian Foreign Minister Dr. Salah Al-Bashir
Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki
Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moaleem
Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ugo Inten
Russian Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov
Slovenian(EU Presidency) Foreign Minister Dr. Dimitrij Rupel
OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

¶4. (C) SUMMARY. The Third Iraq Neighbors Ministerial, held in Kuwait on April 22, offered Iraqi PM Nouri Al-Maliki an opportunity to present to Iraq's neighbors and members of international bodies a picture of the progress in the country. He received a warm welcome and a show of support from the participants. There was a general consensus that notable progress had occurred in Iraq, but that the current situation remained fragile. Iran and Syria laid blame for ongoing problems on the presence of "foreign troops." The EU led calls for the exchange of diplomatic representations, and the OIC announced the establishment of a permanent office in Baghdad.
END SUMMARY.

Progress in Iraq

¶5. (C) Iraqi PM Nouri al-Maliki told the participants

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that Iraqis have moved beyond their violent past and are now unified. He presented an image of a new Iraq that wants to be at peace with its neighbors, in contrast to the war-mongering of the former regime, and lamented that Iraqis are still paying the price for the errors of the previous leadership. He chided the attendees for a lack of progress on commitments made at previous conferences, notably on debt forgiveness, and extolled other countries with "no mutual historical or cultural ties" who forgave Iraqi debt. He also called for an exchange of diplomatic representation.

¶6. (C) Kuwait MFA U/S Khaled Al-Jarallah described the conference as positive and transparent, saying it had succeeded in laying the groundwork for further progress. Most of the heads of delegations who spoke commented favorably on the achievements in Iraq. Several added the caveat that the gains were fragile and that the future remained uncertain. Typically, Arab heads of delegations conceded progress in Iraq but failed to recognize that real change had occurred, a point noted by the Secretary in her remarks.

Outside Interference?

¶7. (C) The negative role of outside interference was another theme of the conference, including citations by some of the negative impact that armed militants had in Iraq. Iran and, to a lesser extent, Syria dismissed the GOI's continuing request for Coalition presence in Iraq and blamed Iraqi woes on "foreign forces" in Iraq. Iranian FM Manoucher Mottaki opined

that these forces "contribute to the continuation of security mayhem, stirring disputes and conflicts, and further complicate the political and security crises in Iraq." He also said that he opposed (as translated) "the unilateral policies of the Coalition powers" and their "conspiracies" against the people of the region. Syrian FM Walid Al-Moalem also called for foreign troops to leave Iraq and indicated that he held the USG "morally and legally responsible for the difficult human conditions of the displaced Iraqis."

OIC Office in Baghdad

18. (C) Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu announced that the OIC office in Baghdad had officially opened three days prior to the ministerial. He said he hoped that, building on the 2006 Mecca Declaration Initiative, this permanent presence would enable the OIC to play a key role in reconciliation efforts between Sunni and

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Shi'a sects. He also announced OIC's plans to send a joint delegation composed of representatives of all OIC affiliates to Baghdad.

Canada Speaks Out for Christian Minorities

19. (C) Canadian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Deepak Obhrai called for increased efforts to recognize and respect minorities in Iraq, lamenting the murder of Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Farraj Rahho and the shooting of Assyrian Orthodox Priest Adel Youssef.

EU Calls for Diplomatic Representation

10. (C) Although there was little specific action on new diplomatic representation in Iraq, Slovenian FM Dimitrij Rupel (representing the EU Presidency) encouraged "those neighbors and other members of the international community who have not already done so to take advantage of the improved security situation and commit to sending ambassadors to Baghdad and opening diplomatic missions to facilitate direct bilateral diplomatic relations."

Japan's New Loan

11. (C) Japan's Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Itsunori Onodera announced that Japan will extend a new loan of 350 million USD for water supply projects in the Kurdish region of Iraq and a sewage facilities project in Baghdad. These were in addition to the existing loans that amounted to 2.1 billion USD. In announcing this, he stated that "Japan is determined to continue its assistance to Iraq." His voice was prominent among those that called for an exchange of diplomatic representation and lauded PM Maliki's efforts in Basrah.

Russia: "We've done the most for Iraq"

12. (C) Russian FM Sergey Lavrov urged caution in terms of a withdrawal of foreign troops, which he stressed "are considered by many Iraqis as occupants [sic]." He also stated that "of all the nations which have already restructured Iraqi debt, Russia has done more for the Iraqi people than any other country in terms of the value and percentage of debt relief."
RICE